

Congress and the Presidency

POL 364

Megan Goldberg

First Block, 2019-2020

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Course Description

This is a course on the United States Congress and the Presidency and the relationship between them. Because of the nature of Congress and the Presidency, it is, in essence, a class on American politics. Through a study of Congress and the Presidency we can see and understand many of the political debates and challenges in American politics. We can see the struggle for power, and the struggle to control the agenda.

Over the course of the class we will discuss many of these problems and challenges: problems of representation, collective action and responsibility, conflicts over the role of government in the economy and private life, and the costs and benefits of parties and partisanship. During this course we will have the benefit of having many contemporary examples of issues and conflicts in Congress. We are studying Congress and the Presidency during a time of "divided government" where the House, the Senate, and the Presidency are not controlled by the same party. At the same time, it is also a time when tension and polarization in government is very high. I have two central goals for this course. First, I want us to come away from this course with a better understanding of Congress and the Presidency, their respective roles in government, and the interaction between them. I will assume that students in this course already have a basic understanding of American Political History and Government, and at least a passing interest in politics. Using that knowledge and interest we will examine the dynamic between Congress and the Presidency in three ways:

1. As a group of legislators and politicians, elected by their own constituencies to represent those individuals in the legislative body
2. As political institutions, charged with forming laws and policy for the nation, and internally organized to enhance productivity and to limit tyranny.
3. As lawmaking institutions, where the national policy agenda is set and where government oversight is based.

Second, I hope that you will also gain some insight in to how social science differs from just being

a political junkie. We will examine how social scientists investigate government actions empirically, and you will do this investigation and study yourselves. What you learn here can and should be applied and integrated with the rest of your education here at Cornell and hopefully even a major in Politics.

Prerequisites/Corequisites

Prerequisites: POL 172 (American Politics)

Course Objectives

Successful students:

1. can apply contemporary and historical theories of Congress and Presidency to both current and past events.
2. can critically evaluate political analysis from pundits and the media in light of the material covered.
3. can critically evaluate new theories from political science based on their own observations of the presidency and Congress.
4. understand the balance and separation of powers between 2 of the 3 branches of the federal government, and how it changes political outcomes.
5. communicate their ideas and analysis to both experts and non-experts in the area in both written and oral form.

This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, inquiry, reasoning, and communication.

Resources

- *Consulting librarian:* Meghan Yamanishi (Cole Library 308, x4143, myamanishi@cornellcollege.edu)
- *Writing Studio:* Jennifer Farrell (Cole Library Writing Studio, x4812, jfarrell@cornellcollege.edu)
- *Quantitative Reasoning Studio:* Jessica Johanningmeier (Cole Library 126, x4222, jjohanningmeier@cornellcollege.edu)
- *Academic advising:* Your faculty advisor can help you with advice about class preparation as well as class selection and future plans. Additionally, Brooke Paulsen, our Coordinator of Academic Advising, can help you with adjustment to college, study skills, obtaining tutoring, and other valuable advice. Her office is on the third floor of the library.

Please make use of all these resources available to you if the need arises - we are here to help! I can also be reached during office hours, by appointment, or by email (I may not be quick in replying to emails in the evenings, however). Feel free to drop by my office at any time during the day between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm as well.

Disabilities

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>.

Academic Honesty

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is their work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading "Academic Honesty."

Attendance

To avoid a penalty for missing a test or paper deadline, you must ask the campus clinic (in a health emergency) or the dean of students or other relevant campus official (in other types of emergencies) to send me an excuse on your behalf.

I will lower the grade on work submitted late by 1% of the maximum grade per hour late (thus, a paper that would have earned a 3.0 (a B) will earn a 2.96 (a lower B) if one hour late, a 2.84 (a high B-) if four hours late). Work submitted late that meets the minimum expectations of the assignment will receive at least a D regardless of lateness, so you should submit all assignments even if you are extremely late. However, I will not accept any work after 3pm on the last day of the block.

To drop on the 15th day, you must complete every assignment due by the end of the 14th day of class and attend class regularly and attentively. In other words, if you are likely to sleep through class on more than one occasion, you should drop now, because you will not be able to do so later.

Course Materials

There are three required textbooks for this course that can be purchased at the campus bookstore or on Amazon. Other readings or materials will be posted to Moodle. The three required texts are:

1. *Congress Reconsidered*, ed. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. 11th Edition. (Dodd)
2. *Congress and its Members*, Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oleszek, Frances E. Lee, and Eric Schickler. 16th Edition. (Davidson)
3. *The Presidency and the Political System*, ed. Michael Nelson. 11th Edition. (Nelson)

Assessment

I will calculate course grades as follows:

Presidential Communication Paper Assignment: 25%

Congressional Case Study: 40%

Oral Presentations: 10%

POL 364 in Real Life Assignment: 20%

Participation: 15%

I will evaluate work using the same numbers used by the Registrar to calculate your GPA (A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, etc.). The benchmarks for the integer grades are below:

4.0: Exceptionally good performance demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a foundation of extensive knowledge, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials.

3.0: Good performance demonstrating capacity to use the appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and an ability to handle the problems and materials encountered in the subject.

2.0: Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems, and adequate preparation for moving on to more advanced work in the field.

1.0: Minimally acceptable performance demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating serious deficiencies.

In general, you will be able to achieve A level performance by addressing the assigned question and avoiding digression, having a well-structured argument, expressing your argument clearly and effectively, making appropriate and properly cited use of material on the syllabus and other well-selected sources, and demonstrating thoughtful integration and interpretation of the course material and discussions.

I will round up grades from the midpoint between grades (for example, a 3.5 will round to an A-, a 3.4 will not). In addition to the above benchmarks, I expect that performance will improve during the course.

Once you have received a grade on a paper or other work, please wait a minimum of 24 hours before contacting me with questions about your grade; please use those 24 hours to review

your work and the grading criteria above so that we can all be prepared to have a productive conversation.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

- Monday, August 26
AM: Introductions, course syllabi, introduce POL 364 in Real Life Assignment
PM: Articles I and II of Constitution, Federalist 51, Dowd (“No Bully in the Pulpit”), Klein (“Green Lantern Theory of the Presidency”), Nelson Ch 1
 - Tuesday, August 27
AM: Nelson Ch 2, Neustadt Ch 1,3
PM: Neustadt Ch 4, Nelson Ch 5, Presidential Communication Paper Topic
 - Wednesday, August 28
AM: Neustadt Ch 5, Nelson Ch 9
PM: Kernell Ch 2, Edwards 2007
 - Thursday, August 29
AM: Data gathering and sharing for paper PM: Nelson Ch 6, 10
 - Friday, August 30
Peer editing and writing session
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- Monday, September 2: Turning to Congress
AM: Presidential Communication Paper due; group discussion
PM: Case Study Introduction and Member Selection; read Federalist 52, 53, 62, and 63
 - Tuesday, September 3
AM: Mansbridge x2 and Rehfield readings on Moodle
PM: Davidson Ch 1, 5
 - Wednesday, September 4
AM: The Development of the Modern Congress: Dodd Part 1, Davidson Ch. 2
PM: Elections part 1: Dodd Ch. 3-4
Research Exercise 1 due
 - Thursday, September 5
AM: Elections part 2: Davidson Ch. 3-4
PM: Congressional Organization: Davidson Ch. 11-12, Dodd Ch. 7
Research Exercise 2 due
 - Friday, September 6
AM: Parties in Congress pt. 1: Davidson Ch. 6, Dodd Chapter 5
PM: Parties in Congress pt. 2: Dodd 7,8,9
Research Exercise 3 due
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- Monday, September 9
AM: Rules and Procedures: Davidson Ch. 8, Dodd Ch. 13
PM: Life in Congress: Davidson Ch. 9 and Dodd Ch. 6
Research Exercise 4 due

- Tuesday, September 10
AM: Policymaking: Krehbiel reading (on Moodle)
PM: Policymaking: Davidson Ch. 13-14
Research Exercise 5 due
 - Wednesday, September 11
AM: Policymaking: Dodd Ch. 10,14
PM: Policymaking: Davidson Ch. 15, Dodd Ch. 17
Research Exercise 6 due
 - Thursday, September 12
AM: Congressional Reform and Future of Congress: Davidson Ch. 16, Dodd Ch. 15
PM: Dodd Ch 16, 18
Research Exercise 7 due
 - Friday, September 13
AM: Interactions between Congress and the Presidency: Davidson Ch. 10, Dodd Ch. 15
PM: Interactions pt 2: Nelson Ch. 15
Research Exercise 8 due
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- Monday, September 16
Peer Editing and Writing Sessions for Case Studies
 - Tuesday, September 17
AM/PM: tying together Congress and the Presidency
 - Wednesday, September 18
Case Study Presentations, Case Study Papers due